

Hello; My name is Roger Nordman. My family and I farm near Oregon Illinois. I am in favor of country-of-origin labeling for several reasons. During the past several years we have been one of the first cattle feeders to individually identify and source verify a large percentage of the animals in our feedlot. We also keep individual health and performance records on most of the cattle we feed. These practices have allowed us to participate in various marketing opportunities that have yielded tremendous premiums. These are programs catering to high-end domestic and international clients. We are part of the Glacier Beef program marketing USDA Source Verified beef through PM Beef in Windom, Minnesota. There is an amazing demand internationally for source-verified beef. We have found that the increased documentation requirements are more than offset by the higher prices offered. Individual ID and source verification present a great opportunity for small producers to develop a niche market, and that will certainly exist whether COOL is implemented or not. But if we are concerned about the growth of our country's agricultural sector we must realize that being the least cost producer is not in our best interest and that simply selling the products we have as "from the USA" will mean very little without documentation to ensure their origin. Since the case of BSE found in Canada, the consumer's attitude toward the food they eat has been strained further. At this time of very high profits for meat processors, very little incentive exists for improving the accountability of the industry, and COOL would provide a proactive way to keep improving our export markets and reassure consumers domestically as we are poised to enter an era with potential for major changes in our food supply chain structure.

A major need that has been addressed recently is the desire to become less dependent on foreign oil by increasing ethanol production. Satisfying the mandate for producing 5 billion gallons of ethanol per year will mean a huge feed surplus in the corn belt. 1.8 billion bushels of corn each year will be converted into ethanol and will yield enough by-product feed to keep 15 million cattle on feed every day of the year. Since most ethanol plants will be located in

the midwest, it is logical to use the resulting feed in the midwest also, where natural nutrient cycling can occur as manure is spread on crop land to replenish the soil naturally. This also reduces the need for chemical fertilizers and restores critical organic matter to the soil.

The combination of low-cost grains and by-product feeds will draw cattle back to the midwest and encourage revitalization of small feedlots. The new CAFO rules based on phosphorus levels are easier for smaller feeders like ourselves to follow. It is much simpler for a farmer feeder to simply apply manure to their own fields than it is for a mega-feedlot in Texas or Oklahoma to deal with the mountains of manure that result from a 50,000 to 100,000 head feedlot. Water shortages in the west are also beginning to affect the viability of western feeders. All in all, the model of the smaller midwestern cattle feeder is much more sustainable. It is also desirable for our communities. A study by Kansas State University has shown that for each 1000 head capacity of a feedlot, about \$450,000 is cycled through the surrounding community per year in the form of wages, feed, taxes, equipment, supplies, services, and other expenses.

Asian and other high-end consumers are demanding source verified meat. We will lose market share to other countries who require source verification if we do not act proactively in this matter. The cost of identifying cattle will be offset in the long run by the expanded markets we will achieve. Jobs will be created as the industry repositions itself as a high-end, value-added supplier, resulting in greater market share in the most lucrative markets. Individual animal ID, which is not difficult with current technology, makes COOL simple. This legislation helps consumers make good choices for their families and builds trust in animal agriculture while providing the industry the motivation it needs to raise the bar on food quality.

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